DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 233 858 RC 014 290

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TITLE Dimensions of Value Diversity among Lower Class Mexican Americans from South Texas: A Metropolitan-Nonmetropolitan Comparison.
PUB DATE Mar 83
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Southwestern Sociological Association (Houston, TX, March, 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Acculturation; Anglo Americans; Behavior Theories; *Cultural Differences; *Cultural Influences; Educational Policy; Ethnic Bias; *Ethnic Stereotypes; Family Relationship; *Mexican Americans; Religious Differences; Rural Urban Differences; Sex Role; Social Attitudes; *Social Bias; Social Science Research; Social Theories; *Social Values; Youth
IDENTIFIERS *Texas (South)

ABSTRACT

The thesis that Mexican Americans share a monolithic, "pathological" subculture that causes difficulties Mexican American children may have in adapting to Anglo society is challenged, using data from studies of Mexican American families and youth. Origin of the theory that all Mexican Americans share a negative subculture is detailed, and influence on educational policies noted. Findings from Texas A & M studies (15 years of research on Mexican American youth and a 1978 study of 172 lower class Mexican American households in Cameron and Brooks counties, South Texas) indicate dramatic variability among Mexican Americans in family structure/practices, language usage patterns, ethnic label preferences, life goals/aspirations, desires for community improvement, and religious participation/practices. A synthesis of findings from the South Texas study concludes that Mexican Americans show marked value diversity (sometimes polarized into opposing valuation positions) concerning family and kin, gender roles, religiosity, and social conservatism vs. liberalism. The clearest case of value consistency was an almost universal desire for structural assimilation with Anglos across a wide variety of social contexts, although many would also wish to maintain distinctive ethnic cultural traits such as Spanish-English bilingualism. Metro-nonmetro differences in value diversity are judged to be of minor significance. (MH)

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DIMENSIONS OF VALUE DIVERSITY AMONG LOWER CLASS MEXICAN AMERICANS FROM SOUTH TEXAS: A METROPOLITAN-NONMETROPOLITAN COMPARISON*

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RC014290

*Paper presented at the 1983 annual meetings of the Southwestern Sociological Association, Houston, Texas, March. This paper contributes to TAES Research Project H-3286. I dedicate this paper to the Mexican American subjects whose generous donation of their time made this study possible. I hope that in some way the findings here will have a positive impact on their lives in Cameron and Brooks Counties.

Introduction

Scenario: two Anglo school teachers talking to the Assistant Principal in the teachers' room of a school in Central Texas.

Jack: Male, Anglo, about 30, teaches history

Mary: Female, Anglo, about 45, teaches home economics

Ted: Male, Anglo, about 40, Asst. Principal

Conversation:

Jack: "You know these Mexican kids are a pain-in-the-ass: they are always talking to each other in Spanish and laughing at me in class."

Mary: "I know what you mean: it does get to you. But what bothers me is that they don't seem to really care about learning. I show them how to set the table properly over and over and they never get it right. I try to show them how to make good nutritious meals - beef stew, tossed salad, and oatmeal cookies - and they could care less."

Ted: "You can't blame them: it's their culture. It's what they are taught at home that keeps them from wanting to get ahead and better themselves."

Mary: "I guess you're right. They really don't want to do anything but stay here and lay around in the sun."

Jack: "Sure he's right! It's what they learn at home and in the barrio that makes them lazy and unambitious. That's why so many of them drop out of school."

Ted: "I guess there isn't really much we can do to help them when you come right down to it. It is almost like they were born that way."

Jack and Mary: Nod their heads up and down, agreeing, as they finish their smokes and get ready for the next class.

Was the above conversation fabricated? Yes, it was. However, I have heard such conversations many times in many different social contexts. It doesn't take much analysis of such conversations to see that the beliefs exhibited by these educated Anglos clearly indicated that Mexican Americans share a singular subculture and that their children are hurt by being socialized in this way. This illustrates a self-blame thesis for the relative lack of success Mexican Americans experience, in comparison with Anglos, in socioeconomic status attainment. This is the "Pathological Subculture" assertion: it is being socialized into the traits of a bad subculture that explain the difficulties Mexican American children have in adapting well to the larger society. Such a perspective is obviously based in simplistic cultural determinism compounded by extreme ethnocentrism. However, these orientations themselves are rooted in, and depend upon, the implicit assumption that Mexican Americans (or rural, big city, lower class, or Texas Mexican Americans) share a common monolithic subculture. It is this keystone assertion anchoring the pathological subculture ideology that this paper is designed to challenge. But before we examine the findings from our recent South Texas study of Mexican American families for that purpose, let use examine more closely the social significance of the above mentioned ideology.

The "Pathological Subculture" Thesis And The Education of Mexican Americans

In the early seventies a number of writers began to explicitly

challenge the widespread and prevailing belief among educators and social scientists that Mexican Americans relative lack of success in achieved status attainment was due to negative aspects of their subculture (Hernandez, 1970; Hirsch, 1973; Brischetto and Archiniega, 1973). This "self-blame" hypothesis was viewed by many Chicano scholars as nothing more than a system of negative stereotypes that had been built and maintained by Anglo social scientists. In a book chapter ("Mexican American Youth and the American Dream") that Rumaldo Z. Juarez and I coauthored several years later, Rumaldo developed a short section titled, "Evolution of a Popular Thesis: A Critical Chicano Perspective" (pp. 243-246). In this section Rumaldo does as good a job as I have seen in documenting the roots and subsequent development of the pathological subculture doctrine relative to Mexican Americans. Because this chapter has not been widely read I am taking the liberty of abstracting several parts of Rumaldo's section and reproducing them here.

Rumaldo Z. Juarez, "A Critical Chicano Perspective" (Excerpts)

> As was mentioned earlier, some social scientists in reporting conclusions and inferences from studies of Mexican Americans have provided support for easy, negative stereotypes about Mexican Americans. It is our opinion that these social scientists have contributed significantly to a general misunderstanding of this cultural minority and delayed a serious scientific challenge of the general validity of these stereotypes. At the very least, much of the extant, widely quoted works of the past greatly minimize the wide variation that exists among Mexican Americans in the United States by regional location, length of residence in the United States, type of place, age, and social class. Consequently, a close examination of the historical development of the negative subculture (relative to social achievement) thesis seem in order.
>
> One of the most influential studies dates back to Florence R. Kluckhohn's (1941) participant-observation study of Atarque, New Mexico. In this investigation, which had its beginning in 1936, the concern was with the patterns and configurations of Atarque's (later given the fictitious name of Atrisco) 157

residents at that time. The results of the 1936 study laid the groundwork for Kluckhohn's theory of variations of value orientations. During the summer of 1951, Kluckhohn, et al., put the theory to a field test in the "Rimrock" area (real name believed to be the Ramah area) of New Mexico (Atarque included), while studying intra- and inter-variations of value orientations of five cultures--the Spanish Americans, Texans, Mormons, Navahos, and Zuni.[5] The findings of Kluckhohn (who was the principal investigator for the Spanish American part of the values study) in 1936 served as a basis for predicting the 1951 results. Based on the 1936 observations, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961:351-55) predicted and subsequently observed that the Spanish Americans were somewhat individualistic, more concerned with the present than the future or past, subjugated to nature, and characterized by "being" as opposed to "doing." Kluckhohn concludes that this type of value-orientation system can explain the slow rate of assimilation and acculturation of Spanish Americans in the dominant American culture. From a small study of a few individuals (twelve males and eleven females) over twenty living in one small village over one short span of history, all-embracing generalizations flow. For example, Talcott Parsons accepted Kluckhohn's findings and moved them up to a higher level of abstraction by theorizing that the Spanish American was a good example of the particularistic-ascriptive type of social unit: characterized as being more concerned with expressive interests and less concerned with achievement considerations (1951:199).

Heller (1966:19-20) developed a self-blame, stereotypic, subcultural model to help explain lack of social mobility among Mexican Americans. The essence of her description of Mexican American youth focuses on an inadequate family socialization. For instance Heller writes as follows about the general home socialization of Mexican Americans, "This type of up-bringing creates stumbling blocks to future advancement, by stressing values that hinder mobility--family ties, honor, masculinity, and living in the present--and by neglecting the values that are conducive to it" (1966:34-35). A few years later Heller rejected some of her earlier conclusions (1969:397). But, she does so by reanalyzing her Mexican American data "relative to other minorities" (i.e., Jews and Japanese). The conclusions she reached from this "comparative" analysis indicate that her views of a Mexican American subculture, which inhibits social mobility, remained essentially the same.

Originating from the same study as that of Gordon, et al., Audrey J. Schwartz's (1969) report on "Comparative Values and Achievements of Mexican-American and Anglo Pupils" provides another example of the impact of the Kluckhohn studies. In her opening statements, Schwartz writes, "The framework upon which the survey was built draws heavily upon the theoretical writings of Talcott Parsons and the empirical findings of the Harvard Values Studies reported by Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck" (1961:1). The "framework" which Schwartz (1969:1-3)

> speaks of is Parson's characterization of the Spanish American society as one having predominantly particularistic-ascriptive value orientation patterns in opposition to the Anglo society's universalistic-achievement value orientation patterns: the Mexican American community is characterized as wanting immediate gratification through expressive behavior, having diffuse personal relations in which people are treated as ends-in-themselves, being more concerned with the ascriptive component of social roles, and relying more on emotional criteria in their relations with others. In contrast, the Anglo is portrayed as having opposite patterns. Armed with these two different systems of value orientations between the Mexican American and Anglo social structures, Schwartz (1969:41 and 53) proceeds to honor the family socialization process as the hero of the Anglo family for inculcating all the "right" value orientations conducive to "achievement," while on the other hand, the socialization process of the Mexican American family is implicated as the villain for producing all the "wrong" value orientations that are not conducive to "achievement."
>
> And so, once again, the self-blame and culturally deterministic model, originally promoted by Kluckhohn, is used to explain the lack of demonstrated social mobility among Mexican Americans. Basta! Basta! Basta!

(End of quotes from Rumaldo Juarez's piece.)

Yes, my friend, Rumaldo, felt strongly about the pattern of "cultural racism" he saw built and perpetuated by Anglo social scientists. Why should he not? It is obvious that such "research" legitimizes a "self-blame" perspective for Mexican Americans' social problems and provides the rationale to justify rooting-out this destructive, negative subculture. And, it turns attention away from the institutionalized patterns of ethnic discrimination and negative prejudice that do exist and which impede the Mexican American's quest for opportunity and equal justice.

Brischetto and Archiniega (1973) in a very inventive piece develop a typology of "Educators' Views of Chicano Student Life Styles" which involves four ideal type belief configurations, each linked with educational perspectives and practices. One of their types is labeled the "Pathological" and corresponds to the cultural deterministic perspective

analyzed by Juarez as described above. The intriguing part of their development is that they described how the belief in the pathological subculture among educators is linked to concrete educational goals, policies, and programs which--from a Chicano perspective--are bound to be labeled as discriminatory (pp. 28-30). The authors summarize (p. 27) these structural outcomes of the educational system by stating that the educational goals are to eliminate the bad subcultural traits and replace these by "inculcation of middle-class values of the majority culture." This is done through "compensatory education" programs. While the picture they draw of the "Pathological" perspective is an ideal type, it probably represents a close approximation to what is the prevailing perspective among public school educators, counselors, and school board members in Texas on how to resolve "the Mexican American Problem."

Diversity Among Mexican Americans

The way to destroy destructive configurations of negative ethnic stereotypes is to document the diversity of cultural traits, social structures, personalities, and phenotypes that exist among a given ethnic category. It is my goal to contribute to this worthy task by documenting value differences among Mexican Americans from the findings of our recent Texas A&M study of South Texas (Cameron and Brooks Counties) Mexican American households. Our own past research of Mexican American youth populations done here at Texas A&M over the last 15 years, and the research findings of other social scientists, have repeatedly documented dramatic variability among Mexican Americans in reference to the following attributes among others:

1. Family structures and practices.[1]
2. Language Usage Patterns.[2]
3. Ethnic Label Preferences.[3]
4. Life Goals and Aspirations.[4]
5. Desires for Community Improvement.[5]
6. Religious Participation and Practices.[6]

So why should we not expect diversity more often than homogeneity? As my notorious friend, Clark Knowlton, one said in a panel discusssion at these meetings, "There is no Mexican American Culture--there are thousands of them." (As I best recall the remark.) Milton Gordon talks of "ethclass," sensitizing analysts to look for differentiated patterns of life by social class within ethnic groups. Certainly social class will make some difference. So will regional location and even more specific locational considerations. And nativity is another dimension of variability as is age--both cutting across locational considerations. All of these factors operating individually and in interaction create cultural and social diversity among Mexican Americans.

It is important that we fight against the "normal sociology" tendency to seek the easy generalizations about intraethnic homogeneity (the gross use of the term "subculture") and interethnic differences. And, instead look for the intraethnic dimensions of diversity and the factors that order these. As an illustration of what I mean in this regard you might like to examine the fine analysis provided by Michael Miller (1978b) on Mexican American youth's preferences of ethnic labels. Mike found dramatic variation among a number of places (high schools) all located in the same geographic area of nonmetropolitan South Texas. Beyond that, within

localities, he found significant patterned variations by SES and gender. In summary, he discovered a lot of diversity which was structured by a number of factors even within a relatively very homogeneous geographical and cultural area.

Objectives

The objective of this research is to synthesize findings from our recent South Texas study of Mexican American families in Cameron and Brooks Counties to examine the nature and extent of variability in general value orientations of the subjects involved. This will be done by selectively abstracting from previous research reports of findings from this study those that are relevant to the focus specified above. The study and the respondents involved in the two locations are described in Appendix A. This is clearly ex post facto analysis: no pretense is made that it is not. However, I feel as a humanist sociologist that this analysis does have social utility in that it adds evidence to build an arguement in opposition to the keystone belief undergirding the "Pathological Subculture Perspective" used to explain Mexican Americans' difficulties in achieving social attainment equality. If there is no singular set of general value orientations shared by all Mexican Americans, there can be no monolithic, widely shared Mexican American ideology that is culturally different from the "Core Culture" of the U.S. In addition, this analysis can contribute toward inductively building a new undestanding in the social sciences about the nature of the diversity that surely exists among those we label Mexican Americans.

Mode of Analysis

My intention is to selectively abstract and synthesize in an ordered analysis findings produced from previous analyses of our 1978 South Texas study. The focus will be centered on general value themes as follows:

1. Familism
2. Traditional Gender Roles (Wife)
3. Religiosity
4. Social Conservatism vs. Liberalism
5. Ethnic Separatism vs. Assimilation

These areas of valuation have been selected because I have indicators in my data from the study for them. At the same time, I think they embrace a wide universe of the stereotyping that has developed in a patterned way about the nature of "The Mexican American Subculture."

For the most part the findings will be abstracted from three as of yet unpublished research reports:

(1) Kuvlesky and Ballard (1981b): a "portrait analysis" of "Life Styles" of "Low Status" (LS) segments of our study populations.

(2) Kuvlesky (1981): a synthesis of gender differences among Mexican American youth, which includes some otherwise unreported youth data from the study involved here.

(3) Kuvlesky and Ballard (1981a): a metro-nonmetro comparison of Mexican Americans perceptions of "Quality of Life".

Synthesis of Research Findings on General Value Areas

Valuation of Family and Kin (Kuvlesky and Ballard, 1981b)*

Analysis of data from our Low SES status (LS) Mexican American families revealed that for both the metro and nonmetro subjects family was judged to be by far the most important element contributing to quality of life. This was supported by consistency within and across the two study populations in high valuation of the nuclear family, as indicated by two general familism items. However, items that were more specific and indicate valuation of particular family relationships (at least by inference) demonstrated some value diversity among the metro subjects and marked diversity among the nonmetro. The figures below represent the percent of respondents indicating the statements shown were "definitely true" of their family:

Items - Family Relations	M	NM
Father Puts Kids Before Job	89	59
Kids Prefer To Do Things With The Family	75	41
Kids Help Parents With Work	93	51

It is clear that even in the eyes of the respondents, particularly in the nonmetro area, valuation of particular family relationships by family member varies. And, the metro-nonmetro differences are marked.

Analysis of responses to a few indicators constructed to reveal valuation of extended family ties produces mixed results. Nearly 90% of the respondents desire to have a home close to other relatives. On the other hand 25% of the metro and 32% of the nonmetro did not consider it important to have a house large enough for any of the husband's or wife's parents to reside

*See Tables 13 and 16 in particular.

with them. Few of the families studied in either location actually had an extended family kin in the household. From our evidence it seems clear that the "extended family" household is not a widespread structure among Mexican Americans in South Texas and, furthermore, is not valued strongly by a majority of Mexican Americans.

Gender Roles: Valuation of The Traditional Female Role (Kuvlesky and Ballard, 1981b; Kuvlesky 1981)

We have two sets of findings relevant to a consideration of the extent of value agreement existing on the ideal definition of the woman's role: one is from our analysis of the Low SES status segments of adults and the other from responses of the teen-agers in the study households. Findings from our analysis of "LS" adult responses indicate mixed results. Strong agreement supporting a nontraditional stance toward "women should have the same career rights as men" was found in both study populations. However, more specific indicators relating to how the family members felt about this in reference to their own family differ. These findings are summarized in Table 1. It can be clearly seen that there is no value consistency demonstrated here. Men in both study areas are polarized into 2 camps on the issue. The metro women are also divided on it, as are the nonmetro women but to a lesser extent. Half of the nonmetro women don't want to work till "after the kids are raised." These attitudes show many support a traditional mother-wife role definition. In fact, only 18% of the LS metro wifes and 28% of the nonmetro were working outside the home at the time of the study.

The observations from the youth analysis is limited to responses to one value item, "Women should have the same career rights as men."

Table 1. A Metro-Nonmetro Comparison of Husbands' and Wives' Attitudes About The Wife Working (LS, MExican American Families)

	Metro	Nonmetro
Attitudes/Wife Working		
Not Work At All:		
Husbands	46	50
Wifes	36	18
Work Part-Time Now:		
Husbands	21	5
Wives	18	18
Work Full-Time Now:		
Husbands	21	14
Wives	29	14
Work After Kids Raised:		
Husbands	4	32
Wives	11	50
Strength of Feeling - Wives:		
Very Strong	82	26

Responses indicating agreement are listed below by gender:

	Metro	Nonmetro
	%	
Boys	80	63
Girls	93	89

Clearly there is variability by gender demonstrated: boys showing much more value diversity than girls, particularly for the metro area.

Religiosity (Kuvlesky and Ballard, 1981b; Kuvlesky, 1981)

Our "Profile Analysis" of LS Mexican American families produced findings on a number of religious beliefs and values, Table 2. In reference to basic belief in God and the nature of God there was high consistency of response among all respondents. However, even in this regard there was marked value diversity exhibited in the degree of attachment to the beliefs, particularly for the nonmetro subjects. Perhaps more direct measures of valuation of religion are indicated by belief in evaluating the power of religion vs logic and the need for religion in society (see items A-4 and A-5 in Table 2). In both of these cases considerable to marked value diversity can be observed. Normative judgements about people "who don't believe in God" (item 13-2, Table 2) show marked diversity. I infer from this that the study populations are about evenly split on judging how important being religious is in order to be defined as a good person.

In summary, almost all of these LS Mexican American subjects believed in God and his supreme powers; although only a minority indicated very strong convictions among the nonmetro category. The subjects were not

Table 2. Religious Beliefs and Attitudes of LS Mexican Americans By Type of Place.

	Metro	Nonmetro
	-------% In Agreement*------	
A. Religious Beliefs		
(1) "I know there is a God."	100 (78)	95 (41)
(2) "God knows everything."	100 (78)	95 (36)
(3) "God controls everything."	96 (70)	91 (32)
(4) "Religious faith is better than logic."	81 (67)	86 (23)
(5) "Man cannot build a good society without religion."	56 (52)	59 (0)
B. Normative Religious Attitudes		
(1) "It makes a difference what religion you follow."	4 (4)	14 (0)
(2) "People who don't believe in God are bad."	45 (19)	41 (5)
(3) "Everyone should attend religious services."	30 (11)	91 (0)

* Includes individuals responding "agree" and "strongly agree." The percentage indicating strong agreement is in parentheses in each case.

parochial in a narrow manner in judging particular religious identifications and they demonstrated marked value diversity about the social significance of religion and its practice by individuals.

Analysis of youth data on an item asking whether or not "religious beliefs need to be strengthened" produced a consistent pattern of polarization across the four gender-place of residence groupings compared. Again, evidence of marked value diversity exists on religiousity.

Social Conservatism vs Liberalism (Kuvlesky and Ballard, 1981b; Kuvlesky, 1981)

An analysis of our LS family segments on responses to items in a scale constructed to measure the degree of commitment to social conservatism produced a mixed set of results relative to value diversity, Table 3. A high level of value consistency within both place of residence groupings was observed for the following values: private property, duty before pleasure, prohibiting marijuana use, and womens' career equality. However, even in these cases for the most part there was a patterned strong metro-nonmetro difference in degree of endorsement or valuation: the metro felt very strongly about these issues markedly more of ten than the nonmetro. On all other value indicators used marked value diversity was observed for both residence types. It was particularly marked for the following:

Belief in competition
Police use of force
Need for stronger religious belief
Sex education in the schools

Truly it is difficult to produce easy generalizations about the endorsement of social conservatism vs. a liberal ethic for our LS Mexican American subjects. Most of them endorse a mixture of items we interpret to indicate social conservatism and liberalism. And, clearly on a number of

Table 3. Liberal-Conservative General Value Orientations of LS Mexican Americans By Type of Place.

Value Orientation Elements	Metro	Nonmetro
	% In Agreement*	
I. Conservative Orientations		
A. Beliefs		
(1) "Private Property Is Sacred."	96 (81)	82 (18)
(2) "Duty Comes Before Pleasure."	96 (74)	91 (5)
(3) "Competition Creates Excellence."	74 (37)	64 (5)
B. Norms		
(1) "Police should use force."	48 (19)	73 (0)
(2) "Religious beliefs should be strengthened."	30 (15)	73 (9)
(3) "Federal Government should stay out of local affairs."	14 (14)	14 (0)
II. Liberal Orientations (Normative)		
A. "Women should have same career rights as men."	96 (70)	86 (18)
B. "Sex education should be taught in schools."	63 (22)	55 (9)
C. "Marijuana should be legalized."	0	9 (0)
III. Minority Concern		
Disagree with, "Too much attention is paid to minorities."	26 (11)	27 (0)

* Includes individuals responding "agree" and "strongly agree." The percentage indicating strong agreement is in parentheses in each case.

these issues there is marked variability within each residence class.

A similar analysis on the same data from the teen-age members of the study family demonstrate even more consistent and marked patterns of intracategory value diversity than was described above (Kuvlesky, 1981: p. 25).

Assimilation vs Ethnic Separatism (Kuvlesky, 1982)

If there are any Anglos who believe that Mexican Americans "like to keep to themselves" and away from Anglos they certainly will find a lot of South Texas Mexican Americans who will contest this assertion. In fact in a paper I delivered at these meetings last year I reported findings from our LS Family Portrait analysis that clearly showed that one of the most consistent intraclass and interclass (place of residence types) patterns of agreement among our Mexican American subjects was an almost universal desire for structural assimilation with Anglos across a wide variety of social contexts.[7] Our subjects indicated a consistent valuation for structural assimilation with Anglos. There were few, if any of them, favoring ethnic separatism. This is beyond doubt the clearest case of value consistency that has evolved out of our analyses.

I should note that this conclusion does not mean that many, if not most, of our subjects would not endorse ethnic pluralism in the sense of desiring to maintain some distinctive ethnic cultural traits; bilingualism in Spanish and English for instance.[8] Most of them are doing just that.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

While this synthesis of findings has obvious limitations that restrict ability to generalize its implications, it does clearly produce a set of

conclusions that offer directions for future research to investigate the breadth or limits of their valid extension to other Mexican American populations at this point in historical time and to those existing in other periods, past and present. Certainly, the conclusions to follow also demonstrate the danger in assuming a dramatically differentiated, wholistic Mexican American subculture: at least, as far as general value configurations are concerned. Within the limits of the data involved here, it seems safe to conclude that Mexican Americans exhibited a number of instances of important, marked value diversity--even polarized into opposing valuation positions in some cases. One the other hand, some lines of strong congruence in sharing positions of valuation were also observed. It will be an important task of future research to investigate how far these shared cultural agreements noted here can be extended within the variety of populations that make up the ethnic "group" labeled Mexican Americans in our society.

While some patterned metro-nonmetro differences in value diversity were observed, they are judged to be of minor significance as compared with the more frequent and clearer patterns of lack of significant place of residence variation relative to both value diversity and value congruence within these groupings.

Perhaps at this time it would be good to present an overview of the major conclusions that can be gleaned from this synthesis. First, I will list in outline form those that relate to value diversity. Then follow with the major dimensions of value agreement.

I. Value Diverse Patterns

A. Family and Kin
(1) Valuation of particular nuclear family relationships, particularly for nonmetro grouping.
(2) Valuation of maintaining an extended family household.

B. Gender Roles
(1) Polarization across residence types on whether wives should work and when in the family life cycle, especially marked for men.
(2) Among teen-agers, especially for boys, diversity on whether women should have career opportunity equality with men.

C. Religiosity
(1) Substantial and patterned metro-nonmetro differences in degree of commitment to beliefs about God: nonmetro show consistently less.
(2) Valuation of the social significance of religion (identification, impact, and practice).

D. Social Conservatism vs Liberalism
(1) Belief in value of competition.
(2) Need for stronger religious beliefs.
(3) Sex education in schools.
(4) Use of force by police.

E. Assimilation (Structural)
(1) A lack of value diversity.

II. Patterns of Value Consistency

A. Family and Kin
(1) In the relative importance of a satisfactory family life, relative to other life ends, being first in importance to overall quality of life.
(2) In general indicators of importance of the nuclear family interaction. (As an aside here, I feel more confident about the more specific measures that reflected value diversity than these more general ones.)

B. Gender Roles
(1) Among LS adults, in reference to endorsing career equality for women. (Again, it should be noted indicators on this oriented toward feelings about their own families produced value diversity.)

C. Religiosity
(1) Among LS adults, endorsements of beliefs in God.

D. Assimilation (Structural)
(1) Very clear lack of value diversity!

In final conclusion it seems clear to me that our evidence on balance strongly argues against the assertion that Mexican Americans widely share common agreements on general values, with the exception of a desire for structural assimilation with Anglos. And, even this commonality could hardly support the hypothesis that they share and maintain broadly a consistent value hierarchy that could contribute as a component to a subculture that is pathological in its impacts on their adaptation to the larger society. The evidence reported here to me would seem to question the existence of any kind of widely shared, wholistic Mexican American subculture. What do you think?

I would like to close this piece with a suggestion I have offered before in regards to development policy or social action programs aimed at Mexican Americans. "Any attempt to assist Mexican Americans in improving their life chances and quality of life will have to take into consideration the quality of intergroup relations. Development policy should be instructed by knowledge of local situations and involve from the outset information and advice from local Mexican Americans" (Kuvlesky, et al., 1982:112).

Footnotes

1. Following a thorough review of the literature on "the Mexican American family" my friend Mike Miller (1978a:225) concluded as follows: "the Mexican American family does not exist. Rather there are a multitude of family systems conditioned by a variety of factors." Mike goes on to suggest as a research need; "Questions regarding the nature and range of variation in family structure and process also undoubtedly remain as important areas of study, particularly in light of the need to confront prevailing myths. I hope some graduate students reading this will pay particular note to his suggestion: it is good advice.

2. See among others Morrow and Kuvlesky (1982); Kuvlesky (1981) and Grebler, et al. (1970).

3. See Miller (1976) for a good review of the literature on this as well as for the research evidence provided from a South Texas study.

4. For an analysis that includes both metro and nonmetro Texas samples of Mexican American youth and the aspiration profiles of high school drop-outs see Kuvlesky and Juarez (1975). Also see Marshall and Miller (1977) for a description of aspirational frames of reference, including family formation and procreation aspirations.

5. This refers to a report (unpublished "Progress Report") from the study involved in this analysis coauthored by Kuvlesky and Ballard (1981a). The analysis and summary provides an ordered description of elements of high agreement and disagreement within the study populations.

6. Kuvlesky (1978) reports high ethnic homogeneity in reference to Mexican American religious identification, which will not surprise anyone. However, he also found dramatic variations within the study population in reference to church attendance, religious self-image, and the social significance of religion. It is not difficult to infer from these findings that Mexican Americans vary widely in the valuation they attach to their religious commitments.

7. These contexts are as follows: neighbors, church, close friends, shopping, work, children in school and playing, and children dating. The lowest endorsement for anyone of these for the metro was 93% (close friends) and for the nonmetro it was 91% (church).

8. In fact I have one indicator from our analysis of the teen-age youth involved in the study that indicates a large majority of both metro and nonmetro intend to teach their children "Spanish Well" (Kuvlesky, 1981).

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Appendix A: The South Texas Study

The Texas data reported here are part of a larger interregional study involving fourteen states of which five concentrated on Mexican American families (Arizona, California, Colorado, Michigan, and Texas): This project, NC-128, "Quality of Life As Affected By Place of Residence," is supported by the Agricultural Experiment Stations of all the participating states as part of the program of the Cooperative State Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.

A common primary questionnaire was developed for use in English and Spanish for use in those states sampling Mexican Americans. Each subject was given the choice to select either the English or Spanish version. Data from the information obtained and selected for use in the present study were the respondents' satisfactions with their community, their place of residence preferences, and their plans to move.

THE TEXAS RESPONDENTS

The Texas study includes 172 Mexican American families (Table 1). Complete family study units consisted of interviews with the husband, wife and at least one child. 138 families were classified as complete. Of the 172 families, 99 were from the Southmost area of Brownsville, representing metropolitan place of residence, and 73 families were from Brooks County communities representing nonmetropolitan residence.* Southmost is part of the Brownsville, Texas - Matamoros, Mexico metropolitan area and is distinctly urban in character. Brooks County is largely rural and Falfurrias, the county seat and the largest town in the county, had a population of just over 6,100 in 1980.

Table 1: Number of Subjects Interviewed In Texas by Study Area, Age Status, and Gender.

	Metro (Cameron County)			Nonmetro (Brooks County)			TOTAL		
	Male	Fem.	Tot.	Male	Fem.	Tot.	Male	Fem.	Tot.
Adults (Parents)	90	99	189	58	61	119	148	160	308
Youth (Children)	40	49	89	38	16	54	78	65	143
Families			99			62			161

* In Southmost a 50% area sample was taken and in Brooks County we purposively selected the older part of South Falfurrias, an area judged to be comparable to Southmost, plus three open-country, rural villages.

Intensively trained, indigenous, bilingual people conducted most of the interviews. All interviews with adults were face-to-face, while youth interviews were self-administered (questions were left for them to answer and were picked up a few days later). Fewer than 10% of the qualified families contacted refused to cooperate in the research.

There are several limitations of this study that limit the ability to generalize the findings to all families in the two study counties. One is based on the requirements of the larger study to which this survey contributes which led to the selection of a particular kind of family for study as follows:

(1) Both parents had to be living in the household.
(2) At least one teen-ager had to be in the household.
(3) One parent had to be Mexican American.

As a consequence the study focuses on what might be labeled, "Complete Mexican American Families": this means essentially that single people, the

elderly, and young couples with very young children were not included in the survey. Another limitation pertains to the purposive selection of sub-parts of the counties as described previously. However, to the extent that the nonmetro and metro samples are similar the findings can be considered generally valid for the entire 2 counties.

A summarized listing of family characteristics on the two sets of Texas families are presented in Table 2. Similarities can be noted among metro and nonmetro family members regarding age and type of employment. But important differences are revealed on other features, especially income and education. Metro households on the average, are larger, the family members have less education, and are slightly more likely to hold blue collar type jobs, yet have annual average incomes nearly $4,000 higher than the nonmetro families. Despite nonmetro resident's higher average level of education and smaller average family size, the large income gap between metro and nonmetro families indicates that the nonmetro residents selected are economically disadvantaged.

Table 2. Summary Overview of Subject Characteristics by Place of Residence.*

		Metro (Cameron County)	Nonmetro (Brooks County)
A)	Adult Characteristics		
	Age (Average Years)	45.5	44
	Formal Education (Average Years)	5.8	7.5
	Unemployment (%)	25.4	28.3
	Blue Collar Jobs (%)	58.2	48.5
	White Collar Jobs (%)	13.8	17.8
	Born in County of current residence or nearby county (%)	39.9	90.0
B)	Youth Characteristics		
	Age (Average Years)	16.0	14.8
C)	Household Characteristics		
	Size (No. of People)	7	5.5
	Family Income (Average $)	10,850	9,625

* This table was taken from another report as follows: Chet Ballard, "Self-Defined Community Satisfactions Of Mexican American Families In Metropolitan And Nonmetropolitan South Texas: Age Status And Place of Residence Comparisons." Paper presented at the Annual Conference on Minority Studies, Las Cruces, New Mexico, April 22-24, 1981.